THE SUBURBAN CITIZEN.

WASHINGTON, - D. C.

In the judgment of Sir Thomas Lipton it is not the conservation of water but the conservation of wind that is most to be desired for the next international yacht race for the America cup. If he could only put up a corner on wind as he did on pork Sir Thomas would be happy.

The "abandoned" farms of Massachusetts are fast being taken up. Three years ago there were 330 thus classed in the State. A recent enumeration shows there are now but 136. All the rest have been sold to persons who desired them for cultivation or for summer homes.

One of the most prominent facts brought out during the disturbances in China has been the high character of the Japanese troops. In the battle of Tien Tsin, in the march to Pekin, they led the van and bore the brunt of the fight. English and American officers are enthusiastic in their praise, and say they will compare favorably with any soldiers in the allied armies in endurance, bravery and good marksmanship. In discipline they take the lead, and in equipment are fully on a par with others. Instances of individual bravery are given on every hand.

State boards of arbitration appear to have failed signally in the purpose of their creation. Twenty-three States have laws providing for arbitration, and these laws are dead letters in all but five or six of the States. In the States where public boards of arbitration survive, labor interests at odds prefer fighting—a resort to strikes and lock-outs—rather than an appeal to these supposed beneficent institutions of a progressive State. This is because State arbitrators have not sufficient experience in the affairs from which labor troubles spring, to inspire confidence in either capital or labor when necessity of adjusting differences arises.

In that turbulent land, South America, the birth of a new republic is scarcely more of an incident than a revolution. Some fifteen months ago a great banker and rubber dealer set up as President of the forest republic of Acre. His constituents were some 50,000 white people, drawn thither by the rubber industry. His republic lay along a tributary of the Rio Grande, partly in Brazil and partly in Bolivia. It is conveniently inaccessible from either, and in spite of a half-hearted visit from a Brazilian gunboat and a reverse on the Bolivian border, President Aries's republic thrives, and his operatives combine the peaceful pursuit of the rubber industry with the sterner duties of war.

Some acquaintance with the expectations and the despair of science is necessary in order to appreciate the full beneficence of the Zeppelin airship. Whatever may happen hereafter it is a fact that in the present century of science and invention Count Zeppelin ascended in his machine a thousand feet from the earth's surface, traveled a distance of sixty-eight miles, made a detour and came down at the starting point, and that he subsequently ascended five-eighths of a mile and executed various manoeuvres. The airship may get beyond control and sail away, as so many lost balloons have done, but no twentieth century boaster can deny that the dirigible airship is the invention of our own time.

The New York Tribune comments upon the census for 1900 as follows: "The United States, at something more than seventy-six millions, is the greatest nation in the world. The direct reference is, of course, to numbers of civilized inhabitants. Only three others outnumber it, and in no one of them is the standard of civilization or of individual intelligence for a moment comparable with our own. Russia proper outnumbers us by less than twenty per cent. But a nation in which probably not five per cent. of the people can read and write, and which has only 26,000 miles of railroads to our 190,000 or more is scarcely to be compared with this. India is larger in numbers than Russia, if we regard it as a whole, and more highly civilized; yet its intellectual and industrial potentiality is far below that of the United States. China is probably the most populous of all, but intellectually is scarcely superior to Russia, and industrially is probably inferior. Certainly its preponderance of population cannot avail to place it by the side of the United States."

THE FADING YEAR.

Toward the sunset-girded Past
See the Old Year plod along;
Fall the twilight shadows fast,
And the resuless winter blast
Shrills its eerie evensong.

From the ragged harvest lands
And the peevish woodland ways
Nature waves her wasted hands
In a last adieu, and stands
Moaning for her golden days.

Over frosted plain and hill
Broods the white repose of death;
And the river's heart is chill,
And the river's voice is still,
As in fear it holds its breath.

Down the dwindling path that leads
Into ages dark and dim
Slow the gray Old Year recedes,
And a phantom host of deeds
And desires follow him.

To his threadbare clothes they cling,
Pleading with him to return
Back across the days, and bring
Half the joys that made them sing,
Half the hopes that made them burn.

Love stands in the path and pleads
For an hour of old delight;
Mocked Ambition cries his needs,
But the Old Year never heeds,
Passing onward toward the night.

Speak one word, departing year,
From thy silent lips and cold—
Tell me, may the heart not hear
Voices grown supremely dear
Calling as in days of old?

From the Past may we not gain
One sweet token of your youth,
One fair blossom from the plain
Where joy bloomed, in shine or rain,
And hope wore the guise of truth?

—R. C. R., in Chicago Record.

A HEAVY RANSOM

TO judge by his haggard looks and the monotonous way in which he was pacing up and down the room, Honorable Robert Spenceley was evidently under the influence of a nervous mental depression when his particular chum, Tom Langton, favored him with a morning call.

"Halloa! What's up, Bob? By Jove, you are looking seedy."

Honorable Robert stopped in his purposeless walk, languidly extended his arm, lightly touched the tips of his friend's fingers, and heaved a deep and bitter sigh.

"Are you ill, chappie, or has the peerless, patrician Penelope——"

"Sit down, Tom. The fact is, I've been a fool."

"And how did you discover it?"

"Well, as you know, I've been mixed up a bit with Lord Templeton and his set. Jolly fellows, but inclined to go the pace a bit too fast. Hang me, if I can say 'No' to anything they propose, and the upshot of it all is that in two nights I have lost upward of three thousand pounds sterling playing cards at the Junior Aborigines—at least, that's the amount they hold my I O U's for."

"What confoundedly bad luck you must have had."

"I posted down to the family nest yesterday, laid the whole affair before the governor, and vowed that I would never touch a card again if he would help me out of this scrape."

"And he has refused?"

"Point blank. He reminded me that on several occasions he had paid off my legitimate debts—small in comparison to this one—but he considered playing cards for high stakes so outrageously foolish that he could not and would not help me. I told him they were debts of honor, but he said it was a most dishonorable way either of making or getting rid of money.

"In conclusion he told me that as it was most desirable that I should break off from this connection, he proposed to reduce my allowance to five hundred pounds a year, during which time I am to travel and see as much of the world as I can on a paltry ten pounds a week"

"And what did you say?"

"What could I say? I have no choice in the matter. I have made up my mind that I will not go to the money lender's, and so I must get these fellows to wait until I can redeem my paper."

"Look here, old chap. I'll come with you for a time, and we'll go in for a walking tour."

"Tom, you're a brick. Let us start this week."

Three months had elapsed since Robert Spenceley's departure, during which period frequent communications—each bearing expressions of regret for the past and promises for the future—kept Lord Methwick fully acquainted with his son's doing. The absent one seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself, judging from his graphic descriptions of the scenery and incidents of the walking tour. Then the letters ceased altogether.

Several times lately the doubt had arisen in Lord Methwick's mind as to whether he had not been too severe, remembering that his son had hitherto borne an irreproachable character, evincing a deep dislike to all the worse forms of dissipation, and there was no doubt that this unfortunate affair at the Junior Aborigines was not the result of inherent or newly-acquired viciousness, but rather brought about by a false position, in which, surrounded by his companions of wealth and repute, he had been led away by the excitement and his inability to say "No."

Now that no news came from him, his father's resolution rapidly gave way under the disquieting influence of foreboding and the continuous entreaties of his mother, until at last his recall was decided up so soon as the next intimation of his address should arrive. The next letter did disclose his whereabouts, and this was the—thunderbolt:

"Most Illustrious Signor: The son of your excellency is doing us the honor to condescend our humble hospitality to partake and has to us your address given so that we may impart his wellbeing. He now his departure desires, but we would that your illustrious excellency to us sending the sum of pounds four thousand Englishe that we may be solaced for his loss."

Then followed an address to which a communication was to be sent, and the missive concluded:

"Any information to the gendarmes will be on the son of your excellency.

"(Signed) GIUSEPPE."

Giuseppe! The most noted and bloodthirsty brigand of modern times, about whose cruelties and tortures so many harrowing tales were told by travelers, and upon whose head a heavy price had been set long ago.

Lady Methwick piteously besought her husband to send the money at once.

"They will kill my darling boy, and you—you will have sent him to his death!"

Her daughters, Honorables Agatha, Ondine and Clovis, added their agonized entreaties; indeed, so carried away were they by their feelings that they actually offered to go without new hats and dresses for the next twelve months, in order to contribute to the ransom money. But his lordship did not believe in giving way at once. Doubtless a lesser sum would be accepted, and while negotiations were in progress and there was a chance of the ransom being ultimately paid, he did not think his son would be in any danger. So he sent an offer of two thousand pounds sterling. The reply to this was a curt refusal, and a postscript added in Robert Spenceley's handwriting was:

"Father, send soon; feel sure they will not take less." But still Lord Methwick would not give in without effort to reduce the amount, and he increased his offer to two thousand five hundred pounds sterling.

The day came when Giuseppe's reply was due, but it did not arrive, and pent-up anxiety caused his lordship two sleepless nights and two miserable, irritable days. On the third morning, amongst the contents of the post bag was a small parcel, the handwriting of the address of which was immediately recognized. With trembling fingers Lord Methwick tore open the package, and there lay disclosed the bold brigand's staggering reply—a cardboard box containing a man's ear packed in sawdust, and inside the lid these words were scrawled:

"No less than four thousand. Part of his excellency is sent free that he may hear you decide which was final."

In after years that day always remained impressed with startling vividness on his lordship's memory. What with his wife's continual fainting fits, his three daughters in consecutive hysterics, their conscious intervals being employed in upbraiding him in such severe terms that one would have thought that the poor man had himself cut his son's ear off; his own mental anguish as he remembered that the future head of his house would never be able to hear both sides; the horrid possibility of getting the wanderer back for nothing—a piece at a time, and the fear that at that moment further tortures might be in course of infliction—he often marveled, not only that he survived it, but that reason did not altogether forsake her tottering throne.

And the climax was reached when, in the softening shades of twilight, Lady Methwick and her three daughters, dressed in black, went in solemn procession to a distant part of the grounds, where, beside a rippling stream and beneath a spreading tree, the gardener had already dug a grave. There, with fresh bursts of tears and passionate sobs, the box of sawdust with its precious freight was solemnly buried, and a cairn built over and about its resting place.

The outgoing evening mail carried two letters, one to the brigands, agreeing to their terms, the other to a friend of the family, who happened to be a consul in the neighborhood, enclosing a draft for four thousand pounds, and begging him to put himself in instant communication with Giuseppe and obtain the captive's release.

The consul did as he was desired, and in compliance with instructions from the robber band, who were evidently taking every precaution against being trapped, proceeded alone one evening, carrying a parcel of four thousand sovereigns to an indicated spot on the outskirts of a forest. Here he was met by a sunburnt, black-bearded giant, picturesquely attired in his native dress, who carried a rifle, while a couple of revolvers and a poinard adorned his sash. Motioning to the consul to follow him, he proceeded but a few paces into the forest, then halted, and blew a long, low, peculiar whistle on his fingers.

Approaching footsteps were immediately heard, and there emerged from among the trees the whilom prisoner alone. As he ranged up to the side of his deliverer, the gold was handed over, carefully counted, and then, with a low bow the robber turned on his heel and at once disappeared, without having uttered a word, and the consul and his purchase were free to depart.

Methwick Hall was ablaze with light on the evening of the heir's return to his ancestral home. The female portion of the family had spent the day in alternately laughing and crying for joy, and were now in a state of intense excitement, anxiously awaiting the return of the carriage from the station. Presently the sound of wheels were heard drawing up to the door, and mother and sister rushing out, fell upon Robert, hugged him and kissed him and half dragged, half carried him into the house, but it was not until after they had been for some time assembled in the library that there flashed across their minds the remembrance of that horror that lay buried beside the stream. His mother first made the discovery.

"Why, Robert, you have two ears!"

"Two ears, mother! Have I not always had two?"

"But we buried one of them."

Honorable Robert was evidently in the dark, and when they explained he declared (truthfully) that he knew nothing about it. As a word painter he proved a decided failure, considering the adventures which they expected him to recount. He had nothing to relate, simple monotony waiting for the ransom, and no matter how they plied him with questions, he could tell them nothing of the doings of the gang, for he said he never saw any of them except the one who had him in charge.

A few days after his return, pleading the necessity of a visit to a West End tailor, he traveled to London, after receiving strict injunctions and giving a promise to shun his old haunts and companions. Arrived in town he at once proceeded to Tom Langton's chambers, and his first words to his chum were:

"I say, Tom, what about that ear, and why wasn't I told of it?"

"Well, I thought you might object, and as it was desirable to bring things to a climax, I got it from the dissecting room at the hospital through a student."

"It took me quite by surprise when they accused me of having two ears, and told me they had buried one of them. But how about the money?"

"I have told the fellows that you have negotiated a loan and empowered me to pay your debts. Here are the I O U's that I have bought up, and the total amount is nearly three thousand pounds. The remaining one thousand pounds——"

"You will please keep for yourself, as arranged, for the double purpose of paying you for your trouble and buying your perpetual silence."

"Thanks, old chap. I will be silent as the grave, but, I say, I had a difficulty in keeping silence when we had Her Majesty's consul in the forest. I never wanted to laugh so much before."—Waverley Magazine.

Japanese Immigration.

Immigration to this country from Japan has brought a higher class with the laborers, and one whose coming is a compliment to our educational system. Education is relatively hard to get in Japan, where wages are so low that a student cannot afford to support himself and go to school, too. But the public schools in San Francisco and the two great universities at Berkeley and Palo Alto are free to them, and ambitious young men of the upper classes have been glad to come to California, where they could work as servants in private households and hotels while preparing to take their degrees. To such an extent does this practice prevail that two years ago it was estimated that there were 5000 Japanese seeking education in California alone.

Only about 1225 were on the whole Pacific coast in 1890. In the next two years 2634 arrived at San Francisco, and many more came by way of Victoria and the northern ports. The arrivals in San Francisco were 1380 in 1893, 1931 in 1894, 1150 in 1895, 561 in 1897, 826 in 1898, 1667 in 1899, and 2664 for the fiscal year just ended.—Ainslee's Magazine.

The Story of a Musical Prodigy.

Elbridge T. Gerry's fixed conviction that the use of children as public entertainers is ruinous to their moral and physical being has resulted in much benefit for talented youngsters and in a deluge of abuse for their protectors. Several years ago he called in the aid of the law to prevent the performances of a child pianist. The child was admitted by all qualified to judge to be marvelously talented, and as the young prodigy seemed to be well cared for, the outcry against the society was loud and long. But Mr. Gerry never flinched, and the law upheld him. Shortly afterward the child was taken to Europe, and the episode faded from the public mind. Ten years later the same pianist reappeared, now in the vigor of youth. His musical gifts had been developed under the guidance of the most accomplished foreign instructors. The public wondered and admired, but few knew that the musician owed the training in his art to the generosity of the man who had restrained him from concert playing ten years before.—Ainslee's Magazine.

The Lie.

"Just as soon as a man has satisfied his conscience that it's all right to tell a white lie," says the Manayunk Philosopher, "he becomes color blind."—Philadelphia Record